

Spring 2004

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Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education

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# explore

An examination of

Catholic identity and Ignatian character in Jesuit higher education

SPRING 2004 · VOL. 7 · NO. 2



## Balancing Work and Family

Dennis Moberg explores  
problems and prospects  
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on the curve Page 26



**Santa Clara University**

BANNAN CENTER FOR JESUIT EDUCATION

## From the Center Director

Dear Friends,

In a recent issue of *Newsweek*, columnist Robert Samuelson wrote that the common perception that we are working harder than ever is an illusion: "People go to work later in life and retire earlier. Housework has declined...Even when jobs and housework are combined, total work hours for men and women have dropped" (March 22, 2004). According to economic researchers, people complain more about the time crunch as their incomes rise: "the more money people have, the more things they can do with their time; time becomes more valuable, and people increasingly resent that they can't create more of it."

It is not clear how to square this explanation with the fact that Americans work on average 240 hours more per year than their French or German counterparts. Nor is it easy to reconcile with the impression that many visitors have of the U. S.: "You people work all the time." American industry and academia demand greater productivity with the same human resources. Is the concern for balance between work and personal life simply an "affliction of affluence"?

Our authors in this issue wrestle with this problem of balance. Family factors, gender differences, workplace structures, commuting, and dual-career marriages all contribute to more complicated lives. We are frustrated by the high standards that we set for ourselves or that are set by the institutions where we work. There is no formula for balance, since it means a dynamic arrangement of combined forces. A harmonic chord has one kind of balance that hints at resolution, but a gyroscope only functions as long as it keeps spinning. Life for most of us seems closer to the spinning gyroscope than musical harmony.

As I hurry to finish this before the deadline, T.S. Eliot's counsel from "Ash Wednesday" comes to mind: "Teach us to care and not to care. Teach us to sit still."



William C. Spohn  
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BY DENNIS J. MOBERG

Gerald and Bonita A. Wilkinson Professor, Department of Management, Santa Clara University



# Work-Family Balance:

## Problems and Prospects

Few issues have dominated the contemporary scene more than work-family balance. Ever since women entered the workforce in droves during the 1960s, debates have raged over issues of quality time, workaholism, and the contemporary necessity of day care. Not wanting women to assume total responsibility for work-family imbalances, feminists have rightfully kept this issue on the front burner. However, the resultant discourse has generated more heat than light. Some employers have experimented with accommodations, and many employees have made earnest attempts to “keep it all together.” Yet, satisfactory resolutions to the challenge of balancing work and family have proved elusive. Too many employees are forced to rely on the resilience of the family unit to

buffer them from the excesses of schedules and ambition. The employer experience is similar: policy changes do not contain the entire problem and too often shift the burden to “unfamiliar” employees.

What is at stake for employees are two of the most profound of all human attachments: an attachment to one’s loved ones and an attachment to oneself. As such, it is a story repeated a million times a day as workers grapple with the many difficult quandaries that require balancing, prioritizing, and compromising conflicting demands between work and family. Even when the situation is not urgent, the choices are often faced with enormous anxiety and self-doubt. Add to that the almost complete absence of a community to support these decisions, and the





work-family challenge becomes one of contemporary life's most pernicious conundrums.

I do not presume to have all the answers. I struggle with work-family balance myself. However, modern social science does provide some important clues about how employees can find balance and about how employers can provide a workplace where this is possible.

### Being a Family-Friendly Employer

There is ample evidence that employers who actively help their workers balance life and work enjoy significant business advantages. Organizations are delineated "family friendly" if they have supportive personnel policies. In order to qualify as genuinely family friendly, employers must offer these benefits:

- dependent care flexible spending accounts (enabling employee support for child care or care for disabled or elderly family members)
- flextime (permitting some flexibility in the hours worked)
- family leave above that required by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act;
- telecommuting on a part-time basis
- compressed workweeks (such as 4/40)

Notable examples of companies that are family-friendly employers are Motorola, Eddie Bauer, Hewlett-Packard, and American Express.<sup>1</sup> Organizations that offer such benefits not only become employers of choice, but they also enjoy such benefits as lower absenteeism, lower turnover, and enhanced employee commitment.

It would appear that being family friendly is an intelligent business proposition.

Unfortunately, however, not all employees in the workforce qualify for benefits supportive of work-family balance. Part-time workers, day workers, domestics, and those working at minimum wages are among those who most need help in attaining balance. Yet few employers of such workers extend family-friendly policies to them.<sup>2</sup> Too often, workers at the bottom of the economic ladder are viewed as assets to be deployed rather than human resources to be developed. And unfortunately, labor market realities weaken the business case for extending family-friendly benefits to these employees. Low-wage employees simply don't have sufficient market power to demand family-friendly benefits. That is what made Starbucks's announcement that they would provide healthcare benefits to their part-time workers so newsworthy.

Clearly, something more than the profit motive must drive organizations to help all workers achieve work-family balance. Employers must embrace work-family balance as an ethical issue. They must see it as their social responsibility to enable workers to provide care and support to the family members who need them. The alternative is an elder population isolated from family support, latchkey adolescents with too much time on their hands, and sick children who are left to fend for themselves. Viewed as an ethical issue, creating dysfunctional families as an organizational effluent is equivalent to polluting rivers and streams.

The most enlightened employers go even further than offering family-friendly benefits. They approach employee work-family imbalance as symptomatic of a series of social and economic factors over which they have some control. For example, commute times in some regions add hours to the workday, compromising any attempt by workers to attain balance. Rescheduling the workday around heavy commutes can address this problem as can organizing carpools so commuting can be less stressful. A more fundamental approach is to concentrate on the supportiveness of supervisors and on opening up advancement opportunities to people historically excluded.<sup>3</sup>

Systems solutions like these often require fundamental changes in the way employment is

conceived. One proposal involves hiring two adult members of a family as a unit and asking them to work a total of a 60-hour week. In order to provide time and attention to children, the couple could divide their hours 30/30 or 40/20. A more equal distribution is consistent with research that shows "... that fathers are happier and healthier if involved in childcare, just as mothers are happier and healthier if they participate in paid work."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, shared work situations like these produce greater intimacy between parents and closer bonding to children than if one parent stayed at home or both parents worked full time.<sup>5</sup>

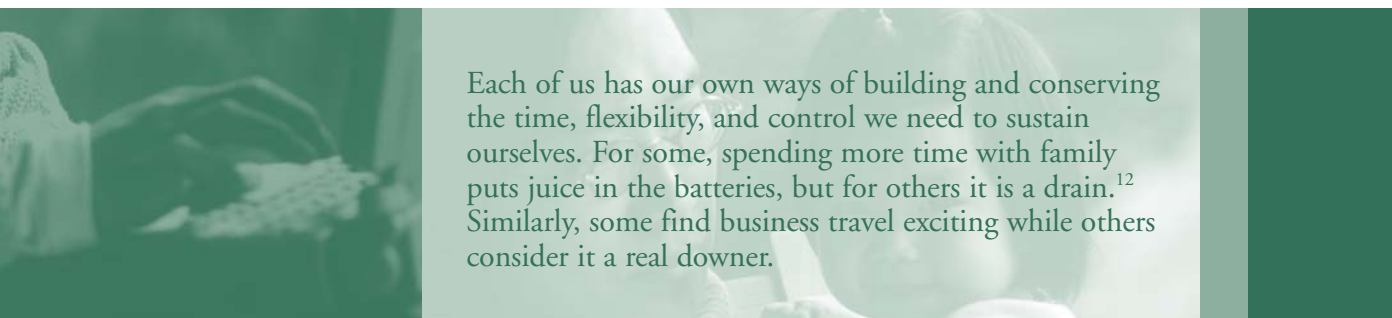
Some argue that such imaginative approaches can be undermined if top management is not a role model of a balanced life. If executives put in long hours and spend little time with their families, it sends the signal that pro-family policies are not for those who aspire to move up in the organization. At the same time, what executives do or don't do with their work lives should not be taken as an endorsement of a desirable corporate lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> Today, diversity trumps every other norm in corporate America, and diversity means that there is no single work-family pathway to organizational success. Any executive who works excessive hours and then foolishly expects the same from his subordinates is a shameful anachronism.

## Attaining Balance as an Employee

Diversity also has implications for the choices that employees make in their personal attempts to achieve balance. Diversity means that there is no one-size-fits-all notion of work-family balance. Some may opt for a work-focused life, and others may choose a life in which family represents the dominant priority. This stands in contrast to the gold-rush level of work commitment demanded in some start-ups and to the orthodoxy in some European countries that people who work hard don't "have a life."

Regardless of the balance point, individuals who do not attain balance have been found to suffer some pretty devastating effects:

- increased levels of stress and stress-related illness
- lower life satisfaction
- higher rates of family strife, domestic violence, and divorce



Each of us has our own ways of building and conserving the time, flexibility, and control we need to sustain ourselves. For some, spending more time with family puts juice in the batteries, but for others it is a drain.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, some find business travel exciting while others consider it a real downer.

- rising incidence of substances abuse
- parenting difficulties<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the stakes are not only individual but societal as well.<sup>8</sup>

In a general sense, balance is attained when the distribution of one's commitments between work and family reflects a convergence between one's fundamental life priorities and the common good. This suggests three types of imbalance. First, there are cases where the common good in the workplace suffers from an employee's imbalanced family commitments. An employee whose work performance is hurt by comparatively unimportant problems at home is an example.<sup>9</sup> A second type of imbalance occurs when one's excessive work commitments result in family outcomes that do not serve the common good. Workaholism is an example of this type of imbalance.<sup>10</sup> Finally, there are instances where employees find themselves mindlessly behaving at odds either with their desired commitments or with the common good. Having strong family commitments and discovering that one is making choices at work that conflict with these commitments is a common form that this third type of imbalance takes.

Attaining balance requires employees to be clear about their life priorities and then to act upon them consistently. Yet, this is far easier said than done. As one work-family expert has observed, "as with most people, my values do not fall into clear distinctions that lend themselves to trade-offs or prioritization."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, workplaces are full of temptations to compromise one's family priorities for the lure of getting a promotion or bonus, and employees' personal lives often entice them to "play hooky" or take frivolous personal phone calls at work. Obvious too are the genuine exigencies that occur in modern life. A son develops a debilitating disease

requiring months of rehabilitation. A machine breakdown necessitates unplanned overtime. Or an elderly mother breaks a hip.

Some employees try to roll with such punches by compartmentalizing, i.e., by maintaining focus on work when at work and on family when at home. Yet, since what happens to people at work cannot help but affect their home life and vice versa, attempts at compartmentalizing are generally futile. It is far more productive to become aware of how one develops and depletes personal resources. Each of us has our own ways of building and conserving the time, flexibility, and control we need to sustain ourselves. For some, spending more time with family puts juice in the batteries, but for others it is a drain.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, some find business travel exciting while others consider it a real downer. In short, there is no one optimal approach to allocating one's energy between family and work. However, a little self-knowledge goes a long way to help one deal with temptations and exigencies in ways that do not exhaust one's personal resources.<sup>13</sup>

Emily Santini is a widowed mother of three who went back to work as a paralegal eighteen months ago, after her youngest son was old enough for preschool. Emily balances work and family with the help of her employer, which offers flextime. This enables Emily to pick up her son at daycare and be home when her other kids return from school. Emily's mother gets the kids ready for school in the morning and keeps their medical appointments. For Emily, the hectic pace of home life is in contrast to her comparatively quiet workplace. For her, the quiet isolation of her cubicle rejuvenates her for the evening of homework and housework to come each evening. In contrast to her attorney boss who must be in court most of the day, Emily



welcomes the chance for informal get-togethers on the weekends. Indeed, while her boss finds social gatherings stressful and anxiety-provoking, Emily finds them a special opportunity for adult conversation and fellowship.

Emily was able to attain her own brand of balance with the help of her mother. Networks of support like these are invaluable in the balance equation. In the Silicon Valley, for example, immigrant communities of Asians and Indians provide community support often lacking among those in majority groups where a similar sense of community has been lost.<sup>14</sup> The family-oriented Latino culture provides similar types of support for workers who are stressed by child- or elder-care realities. Indeed, supportive partners and friends at home can make up for a lack of family-friendly policies in the workplace.<sup>15</sup>

## Future Prospects

New work-family challenges will face employers and employees in the future. Five societal trends will shape the agenda.

- Working hours are up. Knowledge workers in the United States recently passed knowledge workers in Japan as the world's hardest working. It's harder to stay balanced when you are running fast.
- The birth and divorce rates are falling, and young people are waiting longer to get married. The single parent is fading as the poster child for imbalance.
- Americans are making more and better use of personal electronic devices than ever before. The popularity of cell phones, PDAs, and personal computers both facilitates balance and muddles a healthy separation between work and family life.
- The U.S. population is getting older. People in their 80s are the fastest growing population segment. Aging brings wisdom to the balance question, but it also raises the specter that eldercare will be a preoccupation among those still at work.
- Young people are more attuned to the work-family balance issue than any of their predecessors.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps because they suffered from their parents' poor balance decisions, they hold balance as a top priority.

For employers, these forces will probably not create the need for new work-family balance policy initiatives. Most enlightened firms have a policy framework that will stand up to these developments. At the same time, there will continue to be challenges to apply existing policies to emerging issues.<sup>17</sup> Controversy over whether to include domestic partners as covered family members is only the tip of the iceberg. Should, for example, a childless employee be granted paid leave to attend the funeral of a beloved animal companion?

Some family-friendly policies will be much more expensive to sustain in the years ahead. Medical costs are rising much faster than others, and it will take an ethical commitment to extend benefits to those who have historically not qualified for them. Some organizations may find it necessary to take a more active interest in those parts of their employees' lives that have historically been considered "private." Employee diet, exercise, and personal stress management are now more economically significant than ever before.

The younger generation will have a great deal of influence over whether employers make "family-friendly" more than a slogan. They will continue to force employers to make good on their promises and demand that first-level supervisors implement such policies fairly.<sup>18</sup> Most important, their scorn will be felt by executives who attempt to remain credible leaders by exploiting the family lives of their followers.<sup>19</sup>

The largest single challenge to the work-family balance of employees is likely to be eldercare. This looms as an enormous problem for working adults, especially as life expectancy grows, retirement benefits shrink, and poverty continues to plague the very old. Smaller families mean that employees can expect less social support for this problem.

All told, there is little reason to believe that the difficulties people have in balancing work and family will go away soon. More than a decade has passed since leading corporations first installed comprehensive work-family programs. Yet, a survey done in 2002 by TrueCareers indicates that 70 percent of more than 1,500 respondents said they have not achieved a healthy balance.<sup>20</sup> And the situation is even worse for some parts of the workforce.

Large groups of women and minority workers remain unemployed or underemployed because of family responsibilities and bias in the workplace. And in too many cases, the programs have reached only the workers who need them least.<sup>21</sup>

Although diversity has been embraced as an authentic norm in contemporary organizations, it may be a fragile and tentative achievement unless employers are friendly to all families. ✱

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> K.E. Joyce. "Lessons for employers from *Fortune's* '100 best.'" *Business Horizons*, 87 (2, 2003), 77-84.

<sup>2</sup> F. Hansen. "Truth and myths about work/life balance." *Workforce*, 81 (1, 2002), 34-39.

<sup>3</sup> P. Berg, A. L. Kallenberg, and E. Appelbaum. "Balancing work and family: The role of high-commitment environments." *Industrial Relations*, 42 (2003), 168-188.

<sup>4</sup> D. Browning, B. Miller-McLemore, P. Couture, K. B. Lyon, and R. Franklin. *From Culture Wars To Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997) 317.

<sup>5</sup> J. Olds, R. Schwartz, S. Eisen, W. Betcher, and A. Van Niel. *Part-Time Employment and Marital Well-Being*. (Belmont, MA: Department of Psychiatry, Harvard University, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, there is some evidence that executives who work excessively serve as role models not for imbalance but for authenticity. See S. D. Friedman and S. Lobel, "The happy workaholic: A role model for employees." *Academy of Management Executive*, 17 (2003), 87-98.

<sup>7</sup> All told, employees experiencing work-family conflict are between two and thirty times more likely to experience clinically significant mental health problems. M. R. Frone, "Work-family conflict and employee psychiatric disorders: The national comorbidity survey." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85 (2000), 888-895.

<sup>8</sup> R. W. Rice, M. R. Frone, and D. B. McFarlin. "Work-nonwork conflict and the perceived quality of life." *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13 (1992), 155-168.

<sup>9</sup> K. J. Williams and G. M. Alliger. "Role stressors, mood spillover, and perceptions of work-family conflict in employed parents." *Academy of Management Journal*, 37 (1994), 837-868.

<sup>10</sup> K. S. Scott, K. S. Moore, and M. P. Miceli. "An exploration of the meaning and consequences of workaholism." *Human Relations*, 50 (1997), 287-314.

<sup>11</sup> P. J. Caproni. "Work/life balance: You can't get there from here." *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 33 (1997), 49.

<sup>12</sup> A. R. Hochschild. *The Time Bind*. (New York: Metropolitan, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> E. Greenblatt. "Work/life balance: Wisdom or whining?" *Organizational Dynamics*, 31 (2, 2002), 177-193.

<sup>14</sup> J. Shih. "Ethnic identity, bounded solidarity, and the formation of immigrant networks of care." Working paper No. 55. (Center for Working Families: University of California, Berkeley, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> S. D. Friedman and J. H. Greenhaus. *Work and Family—Allies or Enemies*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> K. W. Smola and C. D. Sutton. "Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium." *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23, 2002, 363-382.

<sup>17</sup> W. R. Nord, S. Fox, A. Phoenix, and K. Viano. "Real world reactions to work-life balance programs: Lessons for effective implementation." *Organizational Dynamics*, 30 (3, 2002), 223-238.

<sup>18</sup> G. N. Powell and L. A. Mainiero. "Managerial decision making regarding alternative work arrangements." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 72 (1999), 41-56.

<sup>19</sup> D. E. Meyerson, *Tempered Radicals: How Everyday Leaders Inspire Change At Work*. (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> "Work/life Balance: Challenges and Solutions." 2003 *SHRM Research Quarterly*, 2, 2-10.

<sup>21</sup> Hansen, *op. cit.*, 34.

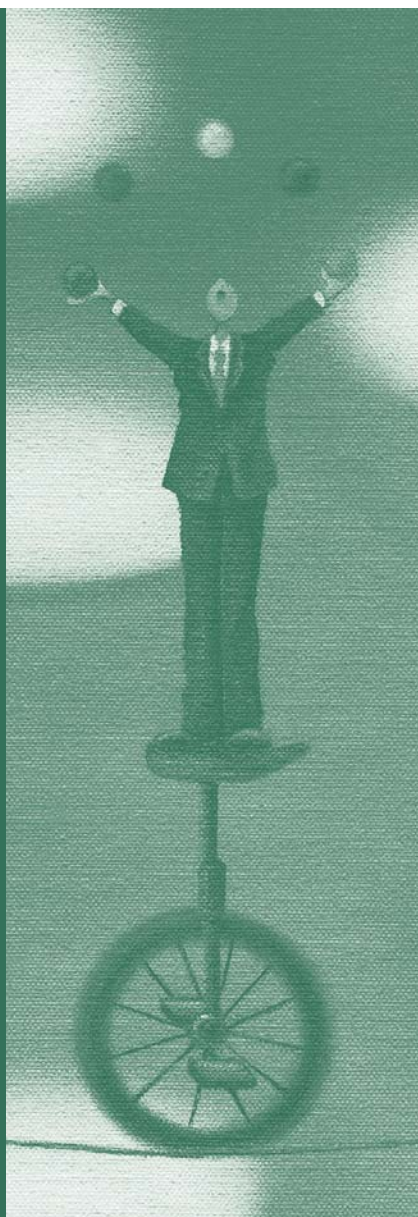


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BY MOLLY McDONALD J.D. '95

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# MY JUGGLING ACT



I would like to open by sharing a quote I came across while reading a James Patterson novel traveling during a recent business trip.

Imagine life is a game in which you are juggling five balls. The balls are called work, family, health, friends, and integrity. And you're keeping all of them in the air. But one day you finally come to understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls—family,

health, friends, integrity—are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, nicked, perhaps even shattered. And once you understand the lesson of the five balls, you will have the beginnings of balance in your life.

—From *Suzanne's Diary For Nicholas*  
by James Patterson. Copyright © 2001 by  
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and Company, Inc.

From my perspective it is important to make a conscious choice to focus on what I value (the juggling balls) most in my life in order for me to be successful. These areas can be broken down into five categories: 1) Family, 2) Profession, 3) Faith, 4) Mental/physical health, and 5) Solitary time. Running through each of these is the manner in which I strive to conduct myself: with integrity, respect for others, honesty, appreciation, and trustworthiness. I must admit that I treat *each* ball as though it were glass and would most likely be accused of treating the health ball as though it were rubber, especially recently since I have not been placing adequate emphasis on exercise.

I am extremely fortunate that these values were instilled in me at a very young age by my parents and the education I received from the Notre Dame Sisters, Holy Cross Brothers, and from eight years of Jesuit education. As I reflect on my life thus far and the various challenges and opportunities life has had to offer, it is apparent that although at times the focus may change depending on the specifics of any given situation or the particular time frame in my life, each of these values has remained a constant in my life for several years.

For me, the challenge becomes not so much about balancing all of these values in an effort to make sure that I devote enough time to each of them, but it is more about struggling with how to excel in each of these areas simultaneously. As I know is the case with many others, I often question how can I be the best professional, best wife, best mom, best daughter/granddaughter/sister/aunt, while at the same time not let any of the other areas degenerate? Part of this is a result of my competitive nature, and part is a conscious choice and desire to place great emphasis on these areas of importance in my life because they *are* my life.

Rather than breaking down each of these areas individually, I have chosen to offer some themes of how I view all aspects of my life, especially those values to which I have attributed such importance.

## Selectiveness with regard to the people with whom I choose to surround myself and creating and fostering a supportive environment

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Those individuals with whom I have chosen to establish a close relationship either share similar values or fully support the emphasis that I place on my values. I have found that surrounding myself with individuals who are not supportive and/or do not share these values can have a tremendously negative impact on various aspects of my life overall.

In addition, whether it be at work, at home, with friends, or in a church setting, it is important to consciously strive to establish a collegial atmosphere, one in which all individuals work as a team and are supportive of each other's collective, as well as individual, endeavors. I have found time and time again that by fostering such an environment each individual feels he/she is never alone as a difficult situation is encountered for which he/she may need assistance. Just as important, he/she also has others with whom he/she can celebrate an accomplishment.

I am a firm believer that not only do we choose with whom we associate, we also choose to make our environment a positive or a negative one. Negative energy, which can be so very destructive, can only survive if we choose to let it do so. By remaining positive, supporting each other's efforts, and treating others with dignity and respect, a constructive and positive environment is fostered, which in turn lays the foundation for productivity and a well balanced personal and/or professional environment.

Although my values never change, the focus may change at different stages in life depending on the situations that present themselves

---

I began my legal and human resources career within a year after graduating from law school. I was single at the time, moved away



from my family and friends to Monterey and immersed myself in my career, with the desire to master the subject matter and offer all I could to the Diocese of Monterey (my first employer).

During my tenure with the Diocese, I got married and a few years later had a child who is the joy of my life. (Viewing life through the eyes of a child is both an enlightening and refreshing experience.) Although my dedication and attention to the Diocese did not change, the manner in which I worked and how I accomplished the tasks that needed to be done certainly did.

I will never forget informing the Bishop of the Diocese (my boss at the time) that I was pregnant. Within the same breath of telling him the news, I also told him that nothing concerning my work would change. He, being much wiser than I, immediately responded by telling me that he was sure that it would in some manner.

Although I had initially planned to return to work within six weeks of having our child (and did via phone within two weeks), circumstances beyond my control kept me from going into the office for almost six months. Although the value I placed on my profession had not wavered, the immediate priority at the time was my family. I had laid a strong foundation of loyalty, competence, and dedication, as well as fostering a strong team both on the family end and work end, which assisted us all in getting through a difficult transition.

When I reflect on the comment I had initially made to the Bishop regarding nothing in my work changing, I realize how wrong I was. Having a child has proven to be a learning and growing experience for me overall which has strengthened what I have to offer professionally as well as personally. What I had initially thought would be a negative force for me professionally has truly been a blessing and advantage for me professionally. I can now relate to situations and needs that colleagues and others in my life have gone through before me and will encounter in the future as well.

### Creative planning

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I find that the more professional and personal commitments I make, the more efficiently and effectively I must work to accomplish the tasks while continuing to focus on the values that are important to me. As I become more experienced, I am constantly organizing, prioritizing, and managing my time in an effort to devote the attention to respective areas that I value most. I find that by planning both my personal and professional time (scheduling when possible all appointments, social commitments, personal activities, etc.), I remain as organized and as present as possible. The realization that people depend on me in most of these areas provides me with the necessary motivation to accomplish most endeavors.



Having a child has proven to be a learning and growing experience for me overall which has strengthened what I have to offer professionally as well as personally. What I had initially thought would be a negative force for me professionally has truly been a blessing and advantage for me professionally.



## Choosing a profession/employer with a mission and vision that is similar to my own

---

I have also come to realize that within my profession I have chosen employers, specifically the Diocese of Monterey and most recently, Santa Clara University, whose values are parallel with mine. When the important values of family, contributing to society, service to others, doing the right thing, living a faith-filled life, and caring for others are part and parcel of both my professional *and* personal life, that realization makes the transition from one to the other virtually seamless. I find myself working towards the same goal in all aspects of my life, just carrying it out in different arenas.

## Work hard, play hard, and give it my all

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I like to think of myself as a hard worker. I've always devoted the great majority of my time to my profession, primarily because I love to work and because I strive to contribute the most and best possible. However, I also love to play and when I do so, I play hard, applying myself fully to having as much fun as possible.

Devoting 100 percent of myself to the task at hand, whether it be preparing to roll out a large project at work, attending Sunday mass, wrestling with my three-year-old, competing in a triathlon, or listening to my 93-year-old grandfather's stories from the past, is extremely important. Being fully present to the people with whom I am at the time and focusing on the particulars of the situation help me to contribute most fully to that task and to rejuvenate for when I turn my attention to a different area.

## Celebrating accomplishments, little and big

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For me, life is akin to a marathon rather than a sprint. I need not only prepare for the journey ahead while appreciating and living for the present, but must remember where I have been. I have found that I can do so by celebrating the accomplishments and milestones, both large and small, as the opportunity presents

itself along the way. Acknowledging our achievements in all aspects of our life provides us with the opportunity to reflect on what we have done well so that we can continue on a successful path.

## Sense of humor and faith

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Lastly, maintaining a good sense of humor, which oftentimes includes laughing at myself, assists me with remaining balanced. This sense of humor, along with my commitment to my faith, has played a vital role in maintaining the necessary balance, especially during those times when my resources feel as though they are being depleted from several sources simultaneously.

In conclusion, I, like many other individuals, struggle to meet the challenge of balancing the various aspects of my life and doing it well. I often reflect on the words in James Patterson's book regarding the juggling balls that place into perspective the various juggled aspects of our lives. Although my balancing act is still being perfected, I have chosen to attempt the balance by focusing on those areas that I value most in my life, realizing that at times I may borrow time and energy from one area in order to devote extra attention to another depending on the particular circumstances of a given situation. The strategies and methods I have developed continue to be modified and fine-tuned as events transpire in my life. My goal is to embrace the balancing challenge, be open and flexible to change, aspire to give my greatest effort to and excel at whatever I set out to do, while at the same time never losing sight of each of the individual values that I so truly cherish in order not to drop any balls. Without them, my life would be meaningless. ✧



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## A Delicate Balance

Recently having had a child, I have been introduced to the challenges of balancing parenting within a two-career family. Looking around I see that I am not alone. In fact, dual-career couples have become more the norm than the exception (Papp, 2000). Reflecting on the challenges of managing both family and career, I cannot help but think of others who are in a similar situation and of those who have already navigated this course in their lives. More importantly, how does balancing career and family affect one's psychological and emotional wellbeing?

Experts in the field indicate that issues of emotional wellbeing between couples arise most often when expectations regarding childcare and household responsibilities are not met (Levner, 2000) and when the relationship between the couple has been strained (Haley, 2003).

In addition to reviewing current research for this article, six people were interviewed to learn how people balance work and family. Their children ranged in age from 10 months to 26 years of age. When asked how they balance both career and family, those interviewed produced a variety of responses, ranging from “pretty well most of the time” and “well, everything gets done,” to “what balance?” While the initial responses varied somewhat, the overall experience tended to be similar. Most people indicated that even though they were very busy, they were managing both career and family, for the most part.

When examining the current literature, it is not surprising to find that much of the work on balancing career and family tends to be rather one-sided, virtually ignoring the effects of family on fathers (Belkin, 2003; Pearson, 2003). Much of the writing focuses primarily on how women balanced both areas, suggesting that men do not grapple with the issue of balance, as their primary role is that of breadwinner. However, this was not the reality for most people I interviewed, although according to research, it does continue to be an issue for the vast majority of couples (McIvor, 2001). A lawyer and mother, in a response to whether women can have it all, stated that she has been struggling with the issue of balance for the last 20 years and does not seem any closer to having an answer. A recent article reported that in 77 percent of dual-career households, females continue to assume the majority of childcare and household responsibilities (Winterson, 2003). Thus, when a child comes along, the full-time job of being a parent adds to the existing demands of ever-present career responsibilities. So how does this affect the emotional wellbeing of the couple?

Current literature indicates that raising a family and pursuing a career can be difficult, stressful, and at times overwhelming. In some instances the stresses may lead to conflict or marital strain if not addressed constructively. Experts in the field indicate that issues of emotional wellbeing between couples arise most often when expectations regarding childcare and household responsibilities are not met (Levner, 2000) and when the relationship between the couple has been strained (Haley, 2003).

To achieve a good balance that is satisfying to all, couples need to prioritize their lives so that the family career is given as much importance as each profession, so that each parent become a primary parent and primary keeper of the household, rather than one parent being secondary, and that neither person's career is given more weight than the other.

When discussing balance, often it is assumed that each person is contributing equally to childcare and the division of labor in the home. However, according to research and the people interviewed, this is not always the case. In other words, people can still perceive a balanced life when the division of labor is not equal. The extent to which this “imbalance” in duties and stress associated with it produces relational discord seems to be contingent upon whether the expectations a couple has for each other regarding those responsibilities are met. Thus, for the individual who expects to take on the primary childcare and household duties less marital discord is likely to result. Unfortunately, when the expectation that responsibilities will be divided evenly is not met, anger and resentment may develop by the person shouldering the majority of the responsibility.

So, how can couples know what is expected of them and what are the other 23 percent of the dual-career couples doing differently? The answer seems apparent: clearly communicating each other's expectations and achieving mutual satisfaction with the arrangements. If a parent wants the other to assume a greater level of responsibility for either childcare or household tasks, such requests should be communicated. Levner (2000) proposes some strategies for balancing career and family, for both males and females. In his work with couples he reconceptualizes the notion of a two-career family to what he calls “a three-career family,” family and everything associated with it being an additional career. To achieve a good balance that is satisfying to all, couples need to prioritize their lives so that the family career is given as much importance as each profession, so that each parent become a primary parent and primary keeper of the household, rather than one parent being secondary, and that neither person's career is given more weight than the other. Levner states that only when couples perceive their roles differently can they function differently from what they know or deviate from the expectations they once had.

For career women, additional expectations may need to be reconciled especially if career advancement is expected. This is particularly salient in academic institutions in light of recent research on women and attaining tenure. The study found that women who have children within five years of completing their degrees (Ph.D. or professional) are 20 percent less likely to achieve tenure than their male counterparts (Mason and Gould, 2002). This provides some evidence that women are often confronted with making compromises between promotions and family life. Interestingly enough, women generally choose the one they find most gratifying, family (McIvor, 2001). While most of the women I interviewed had not faced this yet, many indicated that they felt pulled by both career and family. Many also expressed an ever-present feeling of guilt for being away from their children while they are at work.

Another issue that many couples potentially face when balancing careers and family is a diminishing quality in their relationship. It goes without saying that children consume a lot of time and energy, especially newborns. The time and energy that couples once had for each other are now directed toward the

children. Haley (2003) states that problems may arise when couples do not take time to focus on each other. Because life with a career and children can be chaotic, signs of trouble may not be evident or noticeable at first. Partners may become distant and less attentive toward each other's needs.

In his work with couples, Haley (2003) provides several suggestions to help couples maintain the quality relationship they enjoyed before children. He suggests couples make time to be with one another without the children. Second, the couple should assess which needs of each partner are not being fulfilled and identify ways to meet those needs. The underlying message Haley attempts to convey is that couples should not take each other for granted and should provide one another with the most treasured resource, time.

The people I interviewed mentioned some important factors that affected their balance; they included job flexibility, support systems, domestic help, and quality childcare. Balance is more attainable when both parents have jobs that allow each person to prioritize their career and family more evenly. Having a support system that could help with periodic childcare also seems to relieve some of the stress associated with the increasing demands of work and family. Hiring a housekeeper seems to help some couples balance their schedules better. Finally, easily accessible and high quality daycare is instrumental in allowing each person to give priority to work during work hours.

Ultimately the blending of relationships, children, and careers in a harmonious manner is more art than science. According to psychologists, it is very important for couples to communicate their needs and expectations, but factors such as job flexibility and support systems also seem to play a role in the delicate balance. It seems logical that all factors should be considered when addressing the issue of balance and its affect on psychological wellbeing. Until a more holistic solution is addressed, balance will continue to be an issue for the vast majority of couples. \*

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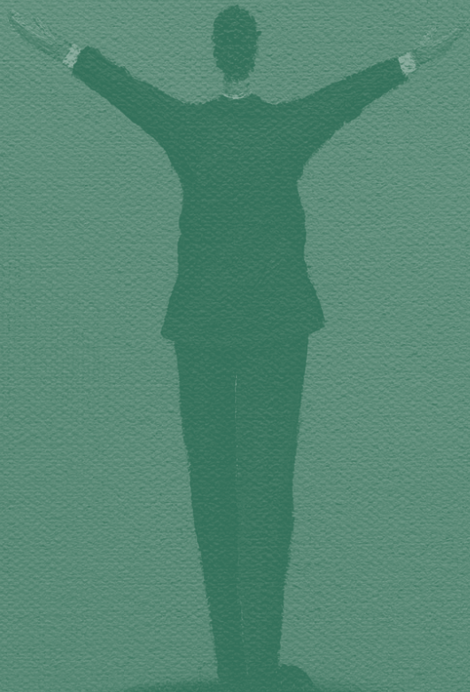
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BY JOHN KERRIGAN  
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# What is a Life Well Led?



*Peninsula Hotel, Hong Kong, 1994*

*As the sedan drove to the curb, my associate Charlie hurried through the hotel lobby doors. "Ready for Jakarta?" I asked as he opened the door and jumped into the back seat. "Let's get the hell to the airport!," was his reply as we edged in to the morning traffic.*

*Known to his colleagues as "The Piranha," Charlie was legendary for his inability to finish any phrase without including an expletive. I soon learned why Charlie, notorious also for his moods, was even more prickly than normal that morning. "My wife just called and told me she's going into labor! I gotta get back to goddamn New Jersey!" "Is she early?" I inquired, mentally calculating the 15-hour flight to San Francisco and the five hours on to Newark. "No," he spat out. "Her due date is next Wednesday. I just tried to cut it too close to the friggin' knuckle!" With that he slumped back in his seat and closed his eyes, jaw clenched.*

*Thirty minutes into our slow crawl to the airport, I offered Charlie my cassette player. He donned the headphones and not long after, in the dim tunnel light, I noticed tears running down his face. From previous experience, I knew better than to try to engage him at that moment.*

Well, I've just violated one of the unwritten rules of professional life: "What goes on on the road, stays on the road." The norm reflects the disconnect between our professional or work lives and our family and inner lives. Why this false duality? What are its costs? What can be done to strike a balance between these two most important aspects of our lives?

You see, Charlie wasn't the only one who cut his personal life too close to the knuckle. For 14 years prior to when Charlie returned to New Jersey to meet his day-old twin daughters, and for another eight years afterward, I had, as Seneca put it, "fully indulged my madness." During my 22 years on Wall Street, I lived in seven cities, served in eight different roles, logged more than 1.5 million air miles, and worked a few too many 100-hour weeks. When I left my 4-year-old daughter's birthday party one Sunday afternoon in May to fly from San Francisco to New York, for the twelfth time that year, she asked my wife, "Mommy, why did Daddy move to New York?"

Nonetheless, I thought I had one of the best jobs in the world. I worked with bright, highly motivated people. We collaborated *and* competed on demanding assignments, the wind of a 20-year bull market at our backs. At times, there were even elements of the mythic in it all: being pushed beyond my limits, entering unfamiliar territory, developing mastery, closing hundred million dollar transactions, building extraordinary teams. I felt intimately a part of the dynamic times, from living in Japan during one of its greatest boom periods, to being a "player" in the e-promise era, when Silicon Valley became the biggest Pullman town on the planet.



If it is true that “a man becomes his uniform,” then I had become my pin-stripes. Sure, I had one of the best jobs in the world, but I kept stepping over the line from healthy passion to unhealthy obsession. I thought I could keep in balance all the conflicting claims and desires of my life: job, family, spirituality to name but a few. As the son of a New York City cop and an Irish immigrant mother, my mindset was, “What I lack in talent I can make up for through tenacity. I will make this work!” It never occurred to me to ask, “Is the life I have now worth what I’m paying for it?” In allowing my professional role and my personal identity to become intertwined, I often failed to distinguish sufficiently between the grandeur and the degrading grind of my work.

My wife, Elizabeth, often tells me that I’ve got high-class problems! And she is right. I make my own schedule, and others work just as hard as I do but for much less compensation. But while others saw me putting up my hand for career opportunities and reaping the rewards of doing so, they saw much less of the sometimes bittersweet consequences of my choices.

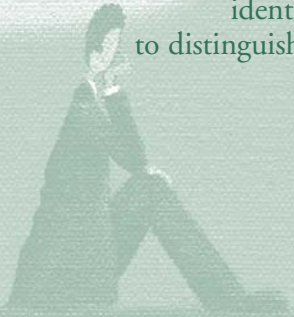
What changed? I wish I could tell you that it was midlife issues, but in fact it was the rise of boredom and restlessness. My Wall Street journey, illustrious though it was, was a young man’s journey, full of emotional, spiritual, and relational tradeoffs, most of which I’m no longer willing to make. The Blinding Vision of the Obvious was, in Wall Street parlance, that I was “long” on ambition and “short” on what the Germans call *sehnsucht* or longing, purpose.

When a corporate reorganization and my decision not to relocate resulted in my leaving my firm in 2002, I had some hard questions to face: “What is maturity?” and “What is a life well led?” These are foundational and essential questions in life. I came to realize that whether life makes work better or work makes life better depends on which is more important. Elizabeth kept asking me, “John, what do *you* want?” as she and I entertained over a half dozen different scenarios, ranging from jobs with a similar pace as my previous one to taking a year or more off.

**It never occurred to me to ask,**

**“Is the life I have now worth what I’m paying for it?”**

In allowing my professional role and my personal identity to become intertwined, I often failed to distinguish sufficiently between the grandeur and the degrading grind of my work.



From those conversations and other approaches to decision making, I eventually chose the path that offered the best fit between what I held dear and the skills that I had so carefully developed. As I work to enhance the value of Santa Clara's endowment and share my perspective on business through teaching, you might wonder if I have any regrets. Not really. I know that I made the right decision back in 2002. I've never looked back, never felt the "what if" arise within me. My work is every bit as rewarding as my days with my sales and trading colleagues.

There has never been a golden age of work. I have found, though, a golden age of marriage and family life, of cultivating my relationship with the Lord, of becoming reacquainted with close friends. This golden age can co-exist with professional life. The challenge is to be equally clear about my personal priorities as about what's expected of me on the job. These days, instead of leaving for work hours before my family awakes, as I had done for years, I'm subjected to my daughter's playful ridicule over my "morning sticking up hairdo" or asked, "Come on, Daddy, let's roughhouse!"

Wrestling with larger religious questions, praying for the grace and virtue to be delivered from my false "self" and to become new in Christ, these and other arts of discernment have helped me to integrate my family life, spiritual awareness, and work. For if faith only becomes real as it is lived through concrete human relationships, my time with family, friends, colleagues, and students has revealed the Lord in joyous ways as never before.

And so this perennial slow learner continues to make his way in life. I take heart in the story of the visitor to the monastery on a remote hilltop, who, curious about how the monks spent their day, asked the Abbot, "What do you *do* up here?" The response? "We fall down, we get up; we fall down, we get up; we fall down, we get up." Personal change is difficult for me, so I've developed positive rituals and routines: personal and family prayer, spiritual reading, a daily examination of conscience, among other practices, to honor my priorities in life. The litmus test is whether my schedule and how I direct my energies reflect these priorities. I also try to model "balance" in my life and in my mentoring of business majors, in whom I sometimes recognize too much of my own careerism.

Neitzche's "bow with great strength" is a captivating image. "Precisely through the presence of the opposites and the feelings they occasion," we are forced to find a balance between our hearts and all our idealism and our jobs and all their messy reality. In the tension of that bow lie opportunities for inspired action and growth in our freedom to love.

And what is Charlie up to these days? He manages a large group of young men, mostly by exhortation. After work, he leads them in "fistful of fifties" nights in Manhattan's trendiest bars. When Charlie's daughters once asked his wife where he was, she responded, "You want to see your father? Turn on ESPN to the Rangers game. You can find your father behind the glass at center ice!" Unlike many of his contemporaries, who've found some degree of balance in their lives, Charlie has yet to realize that his Peter Pan tights are getting, well, a bit tight. But as Abbott Thomas Keating tells us, "Failure is the path to boundless confidence in God. Always remember that you have a billion chances." ✱

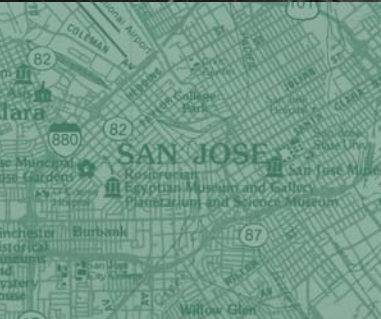


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## The Decline of Community and Growth of Hidden Work



*Do you know the way to San Jose?  
I've been away so long, I may go wrong and lose my way.  
Do you know the way to San Jose?  
I'm going back to find some peace of mind in San Jose.*

(1968) VOCALIST, DIONNE WARWICK  
LYRICIST, ANONYMOUS



As vocalist Dionne Warwick longingly asked, many people have been asking the way to San Jose and the Silicon Valley region in recent decades. Unlike the song, they were not seeking peace of mind, but rather the prosperity made possible in an innovation- and technology-rich environment. The unique characteristics of the region's economy and the educational levels and diversity of its workforce have resulted in an exhilarating magnetic area for both talented individuals and foreign direct investment. Unfortunately, these same forces have also resulted in a decline of community and a rise in hidden work for the holders of jobs in the nearly 30,000 high tech start-ups that sprang up in the last decade.

### Unique Characteristics of the Region

As a region, Silicon Valley's driving economic clusters represent a level of technology employment that is two and half times more concentrated than other high tech regions in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> The concentration of high-value-added jobs here places a premium on education and serves as a magnet for highly educated immigrants. For the Bay Area, immigrants per thousand population are twice the level of Los Angeles, Seattle, and New York, and these population inflows are twice as likely to be in "knowledge-based" professions.<sup>2</sup>

A 1997 survey of high-growth companies found that 84 percent of jobs in these companies require education or training beyond high school.<sup>3</sup> In 2000 a greater share of Santa Clara County residents had a bachelor's degree or higher (42.4 percent) than any other metropolitan region in the country. This unusually high concentration of knowledge workers has contributed to regional productivity per capita in 2000 (\$62.3 thousand) that exceeds the U.S. average (\$32.6 thousand) by fully 93 percent.

In addition to being a magnet for knowledge workers, the Bay Area region is a magnet for foreign direct investment (FDI) in research and development. Whereas elsewhere FDI is more likely to be directed at the "market-seeking" activities of marketing, distribution,

and support services, in the Bay Area FDI tends to be motivated by the desire to gain early access to leading-edge technology and knowledge resources. The Bay Area hosts more foreign-owned research and development facilities than any other region in the U.S. In addition to being a magnet for human capital and FDI, fully one third of the entire U.S. venture capital market emanates from this region.

### A Diminished Sense of Community

Ironically, the information age that this region spawned has, in turn, fostered global innovation networks that continue to raise the bar for Silicon Valley to maintain its preeminence. With the increasing velocity of scientific and technological progress and volatility of change, the ethos of the workplace has become sharply defined by the themes of productivity, speed, flexibility, and, of course, constant innovation. But the emphasis on speed, flexibility, and continuous learning in the workplace cannot be accommodated without personal adjustments outside of the workplace, and these same values have come to characterize the non-work related spheres of individual lives. In the process this has transformed the balance between work, family, and community life. With the exhilaration of participating in the most renowned knowledge-based region in the world, we have

With the exhilaration of participating in the most renowned knowledge-based region in the world, we have lost the ability to maintain clear boundaries between work and non-work.

lost the ability to maintain clear boundaries between work and non-work. Sadly, somewhere in the boom and subsequent bust of the nineties we also appear to have lost our sense of community.

In a 2001 study of social connections and civic involvement<sup>4</sup> we documented that, in comparison with forty U.S. regions, residents in Silicon Valley are significantly less likely to become involved in youth organizations, neighborhood associations, social welfare organizations, or even hobby, investment, or garden groups. They are also much less likely to take on civic leadership roles as officers or committee participants, or to attend club, association, or public meetings of any sort.

Silicon Valley residents rank in the bottom five percent of comparable communities in volunteering and philanthropy. Giving as a percent of household income is 31 percent lower in Silicon Valley. Volunteering is also extremely low. Similarly, residents here are 32 percent less likely to volunteer in a place of worship, 36 percent less likely to assist with a health or disease related cause, 24 percent less likely to volunteer to help the poor or elderly, and 30 percent less likely to volunteer time in neighborhood or civic groups. Residents here also score in the bottom 25<sup>th</sup> percentile when it comes to visiting relatives or socializing with co-workers off the job.

Overall, the findings from the 2001 comparison study of Silicon Valley with forty other regions found local residents to be less likely to experience a sense of community through close friendships, neighbors, others of the same ethnic group, a place of worship, or the city where they live. In the individual-wealth-generating boom years of the 1990s, residents here under-invested in the many elements of community-building that can assure a vibrant quality of life beyond the workplace. The erosion of civic engagement has undermined our ability to solve collective action problems in neighborhoods, schools, and communities.

### You've Got to Pay to Play: "Hidden Work"

Surprisingly, our study of social capital in Silicon Valley did not reveal that individuals here spend more time at work than peers elsewhere. Why then are individuals here less involved in their communities than residents in other regional areas? If they are spending about the same amount of time working, but less time in all types of community activities, one might reason that they are spending more time with their families at home. Because of the growth of "hidden work" this is most certainly not the case.

In the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, hours spent on the job do not reflect the growth of hidden work. Several sources of hidden work are especially evident in this knowledge-based regional economy:

- Continuous learning and resiliency in high-skill careers
- Long commutes associated with housing shortages
- Tethering to the workplace
- Self-service benefits and childcare concerns

Product life cycles and the half-life of knowledge are extremely short in the technology world. The fact that over half of the forty largest companies that existed in this region in 1980 no longer exist today is evidence of "creative destruction." In this context, individuals are forced to spend a great deal of their "non-work" hours keeping up with the latest technical knowledge and managing career risks in highly volatile industry sectors. In many workplaces, forced rankings and the elimination of peers in the lowest portion of the distribution serve as a Darwinian reminder that "the devil gets the hindmost." Moreover, "global labor arbitrage," or the flow of jobs to least-cost labor markets, is shifting the burden of reskilling from the corporate sector to individuals. Keeping up with the latest knowledge in communities of practice and maintaining personal networks are increasingly key to career survival. The hidden work associated with maintaining these parallel communities of

practice and career resiliency is not reflected in the work hours that individuals report; neither is the time they spend commuting.

Since 1992, the person hours lost to congestion in Silicon Valley have increased by 42 percent, and the duration of rush hour has grown by three hours since 1982<sup>5</sup>. In addition, the Bay Area cost of living is now 48 percent higher than the U.S. average, and to gain access to affordable housing, individuals have been forced to endure longer and longer commutes. In the 1990-2000 period, the percentage of Bay Area workers with commute times greater than 45 minutes grew by 36.5 percent. This is “hidden work.” It is growing. And it is not reflected in reported work hours.

Even when finally home, work is still a presence. The Internet makes it possible to do work any place, any time, and this is indeed what is happening. In a study of virtual work, Dave Caldwell and I found that the growth of laptop computing is associated with the blurring of boundaries between the workplace and home and the feeling of being tethered to work<sup>6</sup>. The knowledge economy’s emphasis on speed and flexibility and the norms that exist within highly competitive communities of practice and high performance work teams reinforce this behavior.

Another form of “hidden work” can be found in the fact that companies have shifted responsibility for retirement and health care plan decision making to their employees. Under today’s self-service personnel systems, pensions have been supplanted by 401k plans, and individuals are largely on their own to make complex decisions to ensure their future retirement. Personal due diligence is also required in selecting health and other benefits under flexible benefit programs. Finally, in a region where cost of living demands two income households, searching out and maintaining access to quality affordable childcare is yet another form of “hidden work.”

## Conclusion

The challenges of maintaining a work-family-community balance for a Silicon Valley knowledge worker are daunting. The wealth generation that has occurred in this region created a modern day “gold rush” and, simultaneously,

the highest cost of living in the country. It also contributed to the nation’s greatest level of income inequality and caused the prospects of a better life to escape the reach of all but the best educated or most serendipitously positioned in the path of instant stock option riches. When the history of this region is finally written, one can only hope that those who found the way to San Jose also found the peace of mind sought not only by the 1968 lyricist, but sought by all people in every generation. It is a search vital to the wellbeing of not only San Jose, but of the larger human community as well. ✱

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joe Cortright and Heike Maier. *High Tech Specialization: A Comparison of High Technology Centers*. (The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2001.)

<sup>2</sup> “Downturn and Recovery: Restoring Prosperity,” Bay Area Economic Profile, (Bay Area Council, Bay Area Economic Forum, Association of Bay Area Governments, January 2004).

<sup>3</sup> *Joint Venture’s 2000 Index of Silicon Valley*. (San Jose, Calif.: Joint Venture Silicon Valley), 25.

<sup>4</sup> James Koch, Ross Miller, Kim Walesh, and Elizabeth Brown. “Building Community: Social Connections and Civic Involvement in Silicon Valley,” Center for Science, Technology, and Society White Paper (Santa Clara, Calif.: Santa Clara University, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> *Joint Venture’s 2004 Index of Silicon Valley*. (San Jose, Calif.: Joint Venture Silicon Valley).

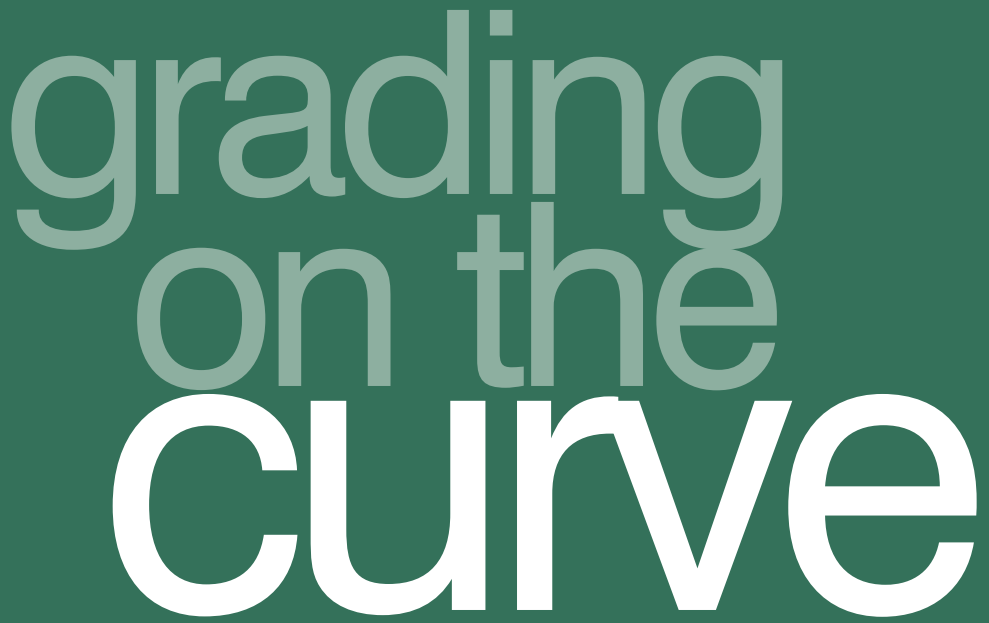
<sup>6</sup> Dave Caldwell and James Koch. “The Impact of Mobile Computing on Work Groups.” *Technology*, Terri L. Griffith, ed. (Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 2000), 133-156.



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BY KATHY POTTER

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# grading on the curve

do you sometimes feel that your life is a high-wire balancing act, and you're working without a net? Join the club! Since being asked to write an article on work and family balance for *explore*, I have been completely out of balance, off kilter. Thrilled at being asked, excited by the opportunity to write, and terrified by the prospect of being held accountable for not only what I say but how I say it, I went into a tailspin around my confidence and ability to respond, even though I have several academic degrees and over 16 years of experience counseling clients trying to balance the many parts of their lives. I thought of doing extensive research on the topic, gleaning nuggets of truth and wisdom from hundreds of books and articles I've read on balancing one's life.



While facing the seemingly unresolvable choice between reporting other people's views and sharing my own thoughts on balancing work and family, I realized I was the perfect example of what frequently gets in the way of people achieving balance, which is the need to "get it right," to choose, do, live (you fill in the blank) the *perfect* option or solution. I was telling myself that only an "A" will do for this article; therefore, I must include everything written or spoken about balancing one's life or risk being labeled imperfect, uninformed, or biased. So, as a metaphor for the journal's theme and as a great revelation for my own journey, I choose to grade myself on a curve for this article, to risk sharing my perspective, and although hoping for an "A" on reception, to be content with whatever results.

How does the idea of allowing oneself to be less than perfect, to choose a grade lesser than an "A" in certain aspects of life, apply to learning to balance work and family? To answer this question, I began questioning the extent to which our society, myself included, has started emphasizing the necessity for complete balance in our lives. For instance, I counsel and coach individuals and groups every day on issues relating to balance by asking questions: Are your working hours keeping you from enjoying your family? Do you find time for leisure activities, for hobbies, for intellectual pursuits, for spiritual endeavors



and dinners with friends? I often refer to the “balancing act” we continually try to maintain in our hectic, often frantic, pace, running from work to home to activities to church to the store to all those activities we get involved in. And I occasionally show my clients the “Wheel of Life” drawing, in which a circle is divided into equal parts representing various aspects of our lives, including physical, career, family, friends, spiritual, leisure, challenge, and finances. Other life “pies” have more slices, different options. The client and I then assess which part of the life pie is full and which part is almost empty. If the client is spending the majority of time and energy in five or six of the areas, what is he or she doing about the other two or three areas? We then start to consider the question of balance.

However, as convenient as I find this approach to be, I believe it is often too simplistic and frequently not useful in helping us to manage priorities and find balance. I believe that regaining some degree of balance is less about an external definition or evaluation of balance. It’s about the internal, self-generated sense of balance, where a person is at any given point in time, and how that moment fits with all the past and future moments.

Let me illustrate this point. I am sitting at my table, writing this article. I pause because the next thought is not coming quickly, and my mind suddenly jumps to an upcoming presentation I need to develop. On the heels of this errant thought come other thoughts: I need to shop for groceries! And then, the floodgates open: What about the friend I need to call? How are my sons doing? Where is my life headed? How will I be able to afford living in this valley??? I am overwhelmed with confusion and fear, and it took only a minute! Did something significant in my external world change in that minute? No. I simply allowed my mind to wander and then followed along with my emotional response. (Buddhist practitioners refer to this in meditation as “monkey mind.”) Had you asked me immediately after this chaotic interlude if my life



If we let go of our need for perfect balance in our lives, we free ourselves of the insecurity, fear, disappointment, rigidity, anger, impatience, and other possible results of unfulfilled expectations. We learn to expect less and enjoy more, to focus on what matters most and ignore the unimportant, to find the balance in the moment and observe more of those moments, and to relish the process and care less about the outcome.

was in balance, I would have said, “ARE YOU KIDDING?!!”

What did I then do, to respond to this perceived loss of balance? I put my pen down, took three very deep breaths, became aware of the many thoughts running through my mind, as if they were very short movies on a screen, felt the tightness in my chest and the slight upset in my stomach, and made no judgment about myself or my situation and took no immediate action. The moment passed; I looked out at the overcast yet vibrant sky and stayed with the experience. And balance returned, even though all those activities my mind just offered were still part of my reality. I realized that the fear that was generated when I reacted to my thoughts was based on my expectation that I had to handle everything, manage all contingencies, and do it all perfectly. I also realized that I could choose how to respond and could confront my expectation for myself. I did not need to be perfect. In that moment, all was as it should be.

I do not want to imply that “being in the moment” means we don’t need to manage our lives and be responsive and responsible to people and events in our lives. Dan Baker in his book, *What Happy People Know*, states that “...practically everybody has only three basic interests in life: their sense of purpose (which is usually their work), their health, and their relationships (with people and with God). After these concerns, the rest is trivial.” These three “interests” would definitely make a whole pie! However, when we establish an expectation for *how* balance *should* be demonstrated, we become attached to a particular outcome. If we do not achieve the desired outcome, we may become less loving, less responsive, and more judgmental. Yet, if we let go of our need for perfect balance in our lives, we free ourselves of the insecurity, fear, disappointment, rigidity, anger, impatience, and other possible results of unfulfilled expectations. We learn to expect less and enjoy more, to focus on what matters most and ignore the unimportant, to find the balance in the moment and observe more of those moments, and to relish the process and care less about the outcome. The Chinese poet Wu-men wrote the following poem, which could have been written in response to our sometimes compulsive desire to manage everything equally well:

Ten thousand flowers in the spring, the moon in autumn,  
A cool breeze in summer, snow in winter.  
If your mind isn’t clouded by unnecessary things,  
This is the best season of your life.

I don’t believe there is a “one size fits all” solution to finding and maintaining balance. I think that certain approaches—determining priorities based on values as well as needs, managing time more effectively, developing goals—are essential in helping us exert some control in our lives. But I have “decided to accept as true my own thinking,” to quote Georgia O’Keeffe, that being present each moment as much as I possibly can, doing what I’m doing and not something else at the same time, and giving up my expectations for perfect balance are goals worth striving for. Discarding my need to achieve an “A” in this unpredictable, wonderful, awful/awe-filled life through some externally defined idea of balance and accepting a lesser grade in my attempts at balance might just result in a life more fully lived and more in balance than I could have ever imagined. \*



**Kathy Potter**  
Director,  
Career Center,  
Santa Clara University

BY DAVID J. POPALISKY

Assistant Professor, Department of Theatre and Dance, Santa Clara University

I need a poem,  
A master poem.  
Once and for all I need a poem to destroy poetry  
And break these iron bars.  
A poem to make the stars blink,  
A poem to trouble the sleep of the chained,  
Some words and strikes of magic to be heard through all the world.  
Power sounds to hurl all wrong to appropriate places.  
—DELBERT TIBBS

# BARRED FROM LIFE

## *A Translation in Process*

In the courtyard of a small shopping center on Chicago's south side, not far from Lake Michigan, Delbert Tibbs turned directly toward my camera and rattled off those words. Delbert is one of eight men I interviewed this past summer, all exonerated after being imprisoned for crimes they did not commit. In the several years he spent on death row in Florida, Delbert wrote a poem every day in an effort to differentiate the excruciating sameness of each day. Delbert spoke about why *I Need A Poem* stood out from the others. "I didn't really write it—the spirit wrote it through me. It happened in a matter of minutes. It was like an answer to a question in my head." The poem took flight when his girlfriend superimposed it on a distinctive photograph of his grandmother, "this white woman with very African features and blue eyes," and copies were sold to raise

money for his defense. Delbert's words truly were "power sounds" that charged the air between us amid the mundane crossings of mid-summer shoppers. More people need to hear this poem, and more than that, feel the stories of men like Delbert, men literally barred from the prime years of their lives by a justice system that failed them and their trust in it.

*Barred from Life* was born in a parking lot conversation, in spring 2002, between Cookie Ridolfi, director of the Northern California Innocence Project, and me after dropping off our boys at school. While I knew, vaguely, of Cookie's work on behalf of wrongfully convicted prisoners, our talk unveiled the need to expose this issue to greater public awareness. It suddenly struck us that a performance work could powerfully illuminate the tragic human consequences of wrongful conviction. Possibilities began to spark

immediately. Cookie suggested critical perspectives to address and legal experts to consult as I wrestled with how to translate a social and legal conundrum like wrongful conviction into a dance performance. Why dance rather than the more literal genre of theater?<sup>1</sup> Isn't moving our bodies, when and how we please, perhaps the ultimate expression of freedom? Could not a body in motion eloquently express the tumult of feelings of someone caught in this nightmare odyssey? We both left excited.

At that moment, I realized this project had the potential to bridge disciplines, serve an urgent educational need, and provide as well a challenging new creative opportunity. Equally clear was the flip side of excitement about a new work, the chasms of doubt and fear about how to go forward, how one can fail. I knew I needed to hear the exonerated men's stories firsthand,

but more importantly, to sense their presence as men, most of whom are about my age, who had survived a special kind of hell. How could I access their feelings? Had I ever felt wrongfully accused? Sure, we all do in small inconsequential moments, perhaps in family squabbles or disputes at work. While the consequences are laughably incomparable, I became alert to these moments as possible windows into the humanity of the men I was to meet shortly. Similarly, periodic frustrations of my creative progress echoed the emotional debilitation of repeatedly pleading one's innocence, sending unanswered letters and exhausting all potential appeals as someone wrongfully convicted and gradually more forgotten in prison. So after repeated failed attempts to conduct Internet phone conversations with my primary collaborator, composer True Rosaschi, an MFA colleague at Mills College, but now

Isn't moving our bodies, when and how we please, perhaps the ultimate expression of freedom? Could not a body in motion eloquently express the tumult of feelings of someone caught in this nightmare odyssey?



Cookie Ridolfi watching David Popalisky in rehearsal for *Barred from Life*.

CHARLES BARRY

living in Vilnius, Lithuania, I seasoned my discouragement with an artistic perspective.<sup>2</sup> Though it slowed my process it also provided insight into the emotional lives of the men I was trying to represent.

Support from the Bannan Center, Hackworth Family grants, and a research grant from SCU allowed *Barred from Life* to take shape, and plans to meet with exonerees began in spring 2003. Things began to take shape that morning in Chicago. I started the day in Milwaukee and, after talking with Delbert, I drove back north to the Illinois border to visit Gary Gauger on his family farm, the same farm where Gary found his parents murdered one morning in 1993. With dishes in the kitchen sink, homegrown tomatoes on the counter, and their cat periodically jumping into our discussion I sat with Gary and his wife, Sue, as he shared his story. That morning he found his father's body in the barn and later discovered his mother nearby. That afternoon he willingly talked to detectives to assist in quickly finding the murderers. In the middle of the night, after hours of questioning and many cups of coffee but no food, he was

accused of killing both his parents and hiding his bloody clothes under his bed. Gary's story typifies how false confessions are concocted by detectives out of scraps from an interrogation where a disoriented suspect can be enticed to make statements that appear to admit guilt.

My final call that day was back on Chicago's south side with Leroy Orange, only a few months out of prison. Due to traffic, I was running late. Squinting at house numbers in the dusky evening I drove past the porch where Leroy sat relaxing in the humid evening. Leroy graciously waved off my apology. As a newly free man he relished the pleasure of sitting unencumbered outdoors. Leroy was among those tortured in the notorious Area 2 police headquarters on Chicago's south side in the mid-eighties, and under those conditions also "offered" a false confession. That two-day adventure in Chicago ended with three more interviews including one with James Newsome, now a staff member for the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University. Flying over Chicago a day later a poem came to me as well, a poem of personal transformation by the invisible men below.

Clearly, though, the "great Spirit" has given these men an urgent voice to expose an American justice system that failed them, and could perhaps any of us if deficiencies are left unchecked. "It is a privilege to make art," says True, and for me a moving privilege to open this window into their lives.

David Popalisky and Cookie Ridolfi discussing the case of Verneal Jimerson, whose brother and sister-in-law Popalisky interviewed, and whose case is featured in the book *The Innocents*.



CHARLES BARRY



*Barred from Life* addresses the complexity of wrongful conviction through mixed media to expand the performance beyond solo dance toward the multiplicity of lives that have informed my artistic choices. A commissioned score and original video are designed to suggest mental states from fragile disorientation to dreams of freedom or nightmares of legal limbo. Likewise the imagery allows the confined set, symbolically a prison cell, to express more than a body contained but the complexity of a human life. Equally imperative are the included excerpts from the exonerees' interviews—their voices, faces, and simple eloquence authenticate the theatrical context. Early on, Cookie and I roughed out a structure to illuminate significant points in a typical wrongful conviction case. Section one revolves around the emotional turmoil at the time of arrest and interrogation. Section two addresses the extended time in prison: the drabness, loneliness, danger, introspection on loss of family, and the spiritual courage to persevere in protesting one's innocence. The concluding section explores the rollercoaster of excitement and frustration after exoneration from the sweet taste of home cooking to the stigma of having been a convict, guilty or not.

Collaboration thematically underlies both this production and any successful exoneration. Only through the collaboration of dedicated law students and lawyers like Cookie Ridolfi and NCIP colleague Linda Starr, who sift through stacks of prisoner requests for assistance before acting on behalf of a handful, does any wrongfully convicted prisoner achieve freedom. Likewise *Barred from Life* has been a rich collaboration of individuals. From student research assistant Katie Thies, as effective an executor of logistical arrangements as she is a fellow artist with whom to share ideas, to multiple colleagues from the Department of Theatre and Dance: Steve Stampley (lighting), David Sword (set construction), Joanne Martin (costumes), Barb Fraser (direction), and Bob Fraser (set design). All have contributed their expertise to the work's conception and will continue to realize production details as we head toward the March 31 premiere. James Linehan, from Media Services, has been central to realizing the tech-

nological needs of *Barred from Life* from video shoots to file transfer sites necessitated by the intercontinental collaboration with composer True Rosaschi. Just as DNA evidence became far more accessible with technological developments in the early nineties, fueling the appeals of many claiming innocence, the Internet now allows artistic collaboration on meaningful projects by artists who share a vision but not a geographic proximity.

I am humbled by these eight men's generosity in sharing their stories of survival and profound self-knowledge. Most spoke about their spiritual life and how it evolved through their ordeal, such as Delbert's trust in the "great Spirit" that "saved me—what on Earth for I don't know." David Pope's initial foxhole religious experience deepened into an meaningful understanding of the story of Job, "who was such a good man, but had all these bad things happen to him." Clearly, though, the "great Spirit" has given these men an urgent voice to expose an American justice system that failed them, and could perhaps any of us if deficiencies are left unchecked. "It is a privilege to make art," says True, and for me a moving privilege to open this window into their lives. Following each performance Cookie Ridolfi and I will lead a talk-back session to discuss the issues raised in *Barred from Life*. Also it appears that James Newsome and Delbert Tibbs, both from Chicago, will be present for both performances along with several regional exonerees. James and Delbert will also be available to speak to classes in the first week of spring quarter. For me their living presence will be the "strikes of magic" to illuminate the premiere of this work. \*

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## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> We learned later in 2002 that *The Exonerated* was in production by playwrights Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen with a similar goal and process of creating a text from interviews with exonerated individuals. It excellently addresses wrongful conviction through language.

<sup>2</sup> After an informal surrender to this barrier in communication, on one last trial True and I inexplicably connected. Persistence furthers.

# coming events

## Sin Against the Innocents

What Have we Learned from the Sex Abuse Crisis in the Catholic Church?

Conference at  
Santa Clara University

FRIDAY MAY 14, 2004  
8:30 AM– 5:30 PM

The purpose of this conference is to bring together some of the best minds in the world on this topic in order to shed some light on the problem of clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. The conference will also launch a new book: *Sin Against the Innocents: Sexual Abuse by Priests and the Role of the Catholic Church*, edited by Thomas Plante of Santa Clara University. The book (available at [www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com)) presents essays by experts such as journalists, theologians, canon and civil lawyers, ethicists, victim advocates, and mental health professionals from the United States and abroad. The essays aim to offer a better understanding of the challenges of clergy sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church following the crisis of 2002 in the American Church.

*Sin Against the Innocents* is a companion to an earlier book on this topic that was published by Greenwood Press and edited by Thomas Plante in 1999: *Bless Me Father for I Have Sinned: Perspectives on Sexual Abuse Committed by Roman Catholic Priests*.

Clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church is a complex issue with few simple and straightforward answers. This conference and book hope to provide a thoughtful and reasoned reflection among leading professionals who are very involved with various aspects of this problem.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

**Leon Panetta** and **Kathleen McChesney** will speak about the most up to date information regarding what the American Catholic Church and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops are doing to manage this problem. Both Panetta and McChesney serve on the Bishop's committee on child sexual abuse by clergy.

### PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

Panels with three different perspectives will address the topic: "What have we learned from the sexual abuse crisis?"

**Panel 1. The psychological and behavioral perspective:** Experts on the diagnosis and treatment of clergy sex offenders as well as those who treat clergy abuse victims will discuss recent findings and approaches.

**Panel 2. Ethics, church governance, and sexuality:** Experts on ethics, Church structure, and sexuality will discuss how the organizational Church can best manage this issue and minimize problems in the future.

**Panel 3. Perspectives from victims, media, and laity:** Excerpts will be shown from the award-winning documentary, "States of Fear" by Mary Raftery, a hugely controversial and influential TV documentary series made in 1999 on the incarceration and abuse of children in the Industrial School System in Ireland. Experts from the media, victim advocacy, and lay groups will discuss their roles in the clergy abuse crisis. \*

For more information or to register for the conference, visit [www.scu.edu/bannancenter](http://www.scu.edu/bannancenter) and click on "events and conferences" or call Jane Najour at 408-551-1951.

## More to *explore*:

### Achieving Balance Between Work and Family

MAY 19, NOON–1:00 P.M.

Sobrato Hall—Commons C, Santa Clara University

Join the authors of the articles in this issue of *explore* for a discussion of work and family balance. The group will explore questions such as: How do workers today achieve a balance between their work lives and their personal/family lives in a culture where both spouses are pursuing careers? Do couples handle these challenges differently at various points in their lives? This promises to be a lively discussion about what contemporary workers are facing socially, professionally, and psychologically, as well as ideas for healthy strategies to cope in the Silicon Valley culture and beyond.



## next issue:

### Community-Based Learning

The next issue of *explore* will focus on the mission and work of the Pedro Arrupe, S.J. Center for Community-Based Learning at Santa Clara University. Founded in 1986 as the Eastside Project, the center's main purpose is to build mutually beneficial partnerships between the University and the community that integrate the concern for justice into the University's curriculum.

Eighteen years later, this partnership has yielded community-based learning sites at schools, parishes, and agencies across Silicon Valley and around the world. Through these experiences, students learn from the unique challenges they encounter as they interact with and serve members of the community.

In this issue we will hear the voices of many partners—community members, students, professors, and University administrators—as they describe their inspirations, challenges, and contributions to the work of the Arrupe Center.



## SIN AGAINST THE INNOCENTS

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE  
SEX ABUSE CRISIS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

Experts will discuss what we have learned from this crisis and the implications for Catholics in the future. We will also launch a new book entitled: *Sin Against the Innocents: Sexual Abuse by Priests and the Role of the Catholic Church* (Greenwood, 2004) edited by Thomas G. Plante (Santa Clara University).

For more information, see page 34.

CONFERENCE AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY MAY 14, 2004  
8:30 AM– 5:30 PM



**Santa Clara University**

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